



ENGLISH AVENUE

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE



Acknowledgement

This planning document represents the culmination of a comprehensive planning process for the English Avenue community under the guidance of the English Avenue Neighborhood Association in partnership with the City of Atlanta and the Atlanta Development Authority.

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1. 1 Redevelopment Plan Update Overview

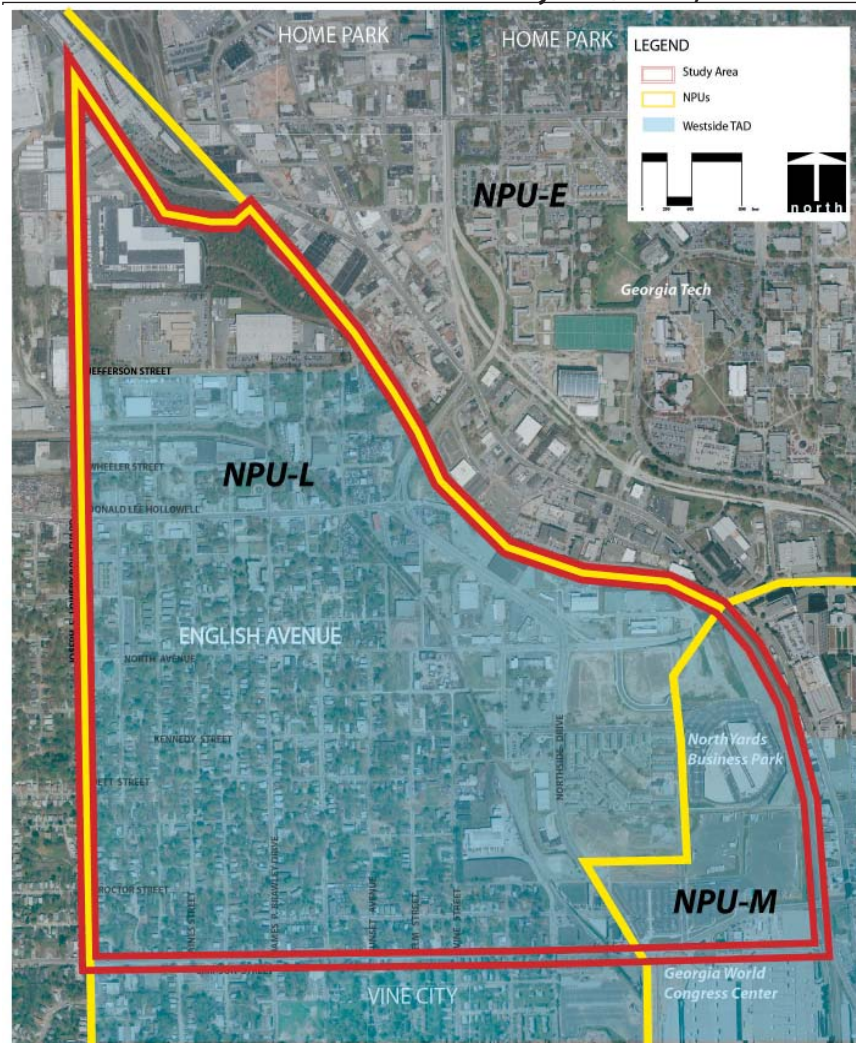
This plan builds upon the previously adopted Community Redevelopment Plan (1998) that represents the countless hours of dedication and commitment of community stakeholders to capture a comprehensive approach towards reinvestment in the English Avenue Community. Since the development and adoption of the 1998 plan, increased speculation in English Avenue has been generated due to a resurgence of development and growth in the area. The English Avenue Neighborhood Association (EANA) along with the Atlanta Development Authority recognizes this increased interest and wants to be in the forefront of mobilizing and empowering the community stakeholders with a comprehensive vision and implementation strategies towards development by being proactive versus reactive.

Authority and Scope of Redevelopment Powers

The English Avenue
C o m m u n i t y
Redevelopment Plan (CRP) Update is a comprehensive document defining the official public policy guidelines of the City of Atlanta for conduct of public and private redevelopment actions in compliance with the Redevelopment Powers Law (O.C.G.A. Section 36-44) of the State of Georgia. This plan fulfills the requirement of providing a “written plan of redevelopment.” Furthermore,

the existing condition analyses contained in Part 2 provides full documentation as to the area's qualification for designation as a redevelopment area (i.e., specific findings of slum and blight). Upon its adoption by resolution of the City Council and approval by the Mayor of Atlanta, this plan will serve as confirmation that the English Avenue study area is appropriate for urban redevelopment initiatives because of blight, distress and impaired development.

Figure 1.1
Study Area/ NPU, Westside TAD



Further, this plan, as required by law, establishes that the "rehabilitation, conservation, or redevelopment, or a combination thereof, of such area or areas is necessary in the interest of public health, safety, morals, or welfare of the residents of the municipality or county." This plan thus becomes the basis on which the City of Atlanta may exercise its urban redevelopment powers in accordance with the Redevelopment Powers Law and other related legislation and administrative regulations of the State of Georgia.

The update of the English Avenue Community Redevelopment Plan (CRP) attempts to tell the story of the English Avenue community that

describes its physical attributes and constraints; outlines its public participation process, describes goals and objectives that help drive this planning effort; lays out the issues and opportunities that serve as the foundation for change; enunciates the framework for future development and spells out the implementation strategy to support policy and development.

1.2 Study Area and Context

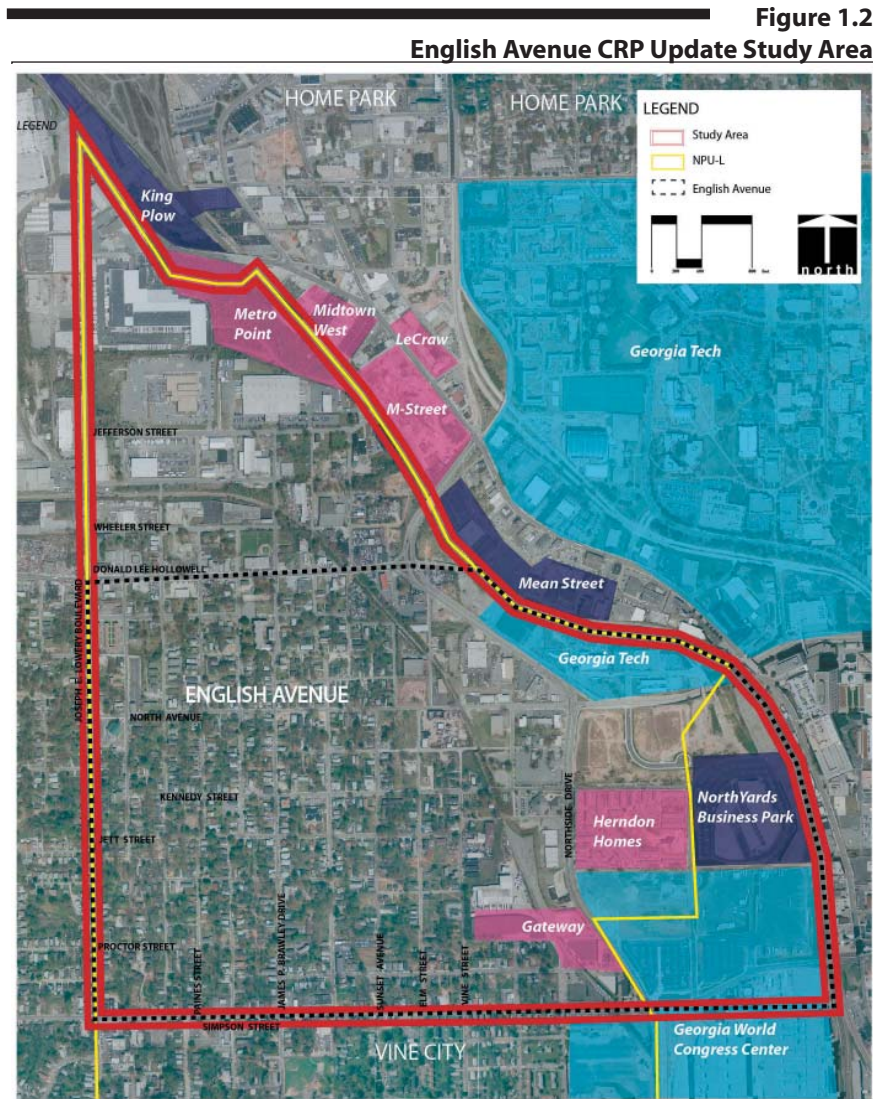
The English Avenue neighborhood is a community with rich heritage and lasting capital vested in it's people. It is located northwest of Atlanta's Downtown Business District and in close proximity to the major Georgia tourism and special event attractions including the Georgia Aquarium and the future home of the World of Coke, the Georgia Dome and Georgia World Congress Center. Northside Drive, which bisects the English Avenue neighborhood, is a regional arterial providing access to the major educational institutions surrounding the community including Georgia Institute of Technology and the Atlanta University Center institutions. The recently constructed Atlantic Station, is a major employment and economic generator within two miles of the study area.

For the purposes of this CRP update planning effort the study area captures the 1998 plan boundary (consisting of the official neighborhood boundary; Norfolk Southern rail corridor to the east, Donald Lee Hollowell to the north, Joseph E. Lowery Boulevard to the west and Simpson Street to the south) but also includes the industrial area north of Donald Lee Hollowell to Marietta Street and extends to the Norfolk Southern rail line on the north and east.

English Avenue is located in the Neighborhood Planning

Unit (NPU)-L, the City of Atlanta Westside Tax Allocation District and Renewal Community area (formerly the Atlanta Empowerment Zone). It is affectionately called the "Westside" by long-term residents.

The existing development pattern within English Avenue includes a concentration of industrial land uses adjacent to the Norfolk Southern Railroad. Residential dwellings in various styles and density are in the core of the neighborhood while neighborhood commercial services (retail, office and institutional uses) are sprinkled along major corridors including Donald Lee Hollowell, Simpson Street, Northside Drive and Joseph E. Lowery Boulevard.



community. Additionally, Greater Vine City Opportunities Program, Inc. founded by State Representative "Able" Mable Thomas operates a neighborhood driven serviced based organization which designs and implements programs to provide alternative activities to youth that are consistently exposed to negative behaviors. Thereby, the program offers a holistic approach to the general community by integrating parent involvement with youth social, cultural and leadership development. These activities include

Saturday Enrichment Programs, After School Tutorials, Girls to Womanhood Rites of Passage Programs, Creative Arts and Dance Initiatives and an annual Christmas Party and Easter Egg Hunt for needy families throughout the Westside neighborhoods.

The Metro Point Lofts along Marietta Street and the Gateway Apartments along Northside Drive are recently developed multifamily residential communities that have contributed to the increased residential population of English Avenue. Prior to this new development, the last multifamily new construction in English Avenue occurred in the 1970s.

Georgia Tech has expanded its campus to North Avenue and Northside Drive with the construction of new research facilities. The Georgia World Congress Center has increased its parking capacity through the construction of new surface parking adjacent to North Yards Business Park and Herndon Homes, an Atlanta Housing Authority property.

The neighborhoods surrounding the English Avenue community include Vine City to the south, Georgia Tech to the east, Home Park to the north and Washington Park to the west.

1.3 English Avenue Historical Background

English Avenue bears the name of James W. English, a former mayor of Atlanta (January, 1881 – January, 1883), banker, brick company owner, and decorated soldier post-Civil War. In the 1891 the undeveloped settlement, known today as English Avenue was purchased by the mayor's son, James W. English, Jr. and developed as a white working-class neighborhood. The main street through the center of the neighborhood also bears the English family name.

The construction of trolley lines and the Southern railroad heavily influenced the development of English Avenue. By 1912, the area was serviced by the Atlanta and Chattahoochee Railway Company Trolley's. One extended from Jones Avenue to Gray Street (Northside Drive), to Kennedy Street to English Avenue. The second line ran down Martin Luther King Jr. Drive to Ashby Street, ending on Bankhead Highway (Donald E. Hollowell). The new trolley and rail lines defined residential development patterns racially. By 1924, whites resided predominantly within the area bounded by the two trolley lines and black residents lived in the areas outside the trolley lines. During the same time period, the Southern Railway tracks served as a distinct northeastern barrier to blacks and continued to be a racial dividing line through the 1970s which was

also the center of employment and industry for local residents which included metal manufacturing, oil, steel, supplies, mattresses, wastepaper baling, a lumberyard, and a freight station.

The period following the Atlanta fire of 1917 that destroyed much of the old Forth Ward, resulted in a rapid increase of African Americans moving west along Simpson Road and Bankhead Highway (Donald Lee Hollowell). Along with the trolley and rail lines, Simpson Road served as a physical dividing line between black and white residential communities therefore attempts by African Americans between the 1920s and 1940s to move north of Simpson Road resulted in violence and bombings. With Atlanta Housing Authority

opening Herndon Homes, **Donald Lee Hollowell Retail** a 200 unit public housing complex in the eastern section of English Avenue, the African American population increased in



the community. Named after Alonzo Herndon, a prominent black Atlantan and business owner who established the Atlanta Life Insurance Company, Herndon Homes is one of two remaining 100% public housing complexes in proximity to English Avenue that have yet to convert to mixed-income redevelopment in the last 10 years.

Historically the thriving commercial centers for English Avenue were located in the heart of the neighborhood and on the fringes of the community. The corner of Kennedy Street and James P. Brawley was the home of barber and beauty shops, restaurants and convenience shopping which local residents frequented. Donald Lee Hollowell (formally Bankhead Highway), was a United States cross-country automobile highway

connecting Washington and San Diego and was in its splendor during the 1960's. In the early 1970's when suburban growth and a

Simpson Road Retail



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decrease in population began to drain the area's vitality, many longtime businesses closed and were replaced by low-rent businesses. With reinvestment occurring along the corridor including the renovation of the historic Carnegie Library, proposed redevelopment of the English Avenue School and warehouse conversions occurring to the north, there is a resurgence of development interest in the area.

In addition, Simpson Road named for Leonard Christopher Simpson, Atlanta's first lawyer, is known as another prominent street for African American businesses, restaurants and shops during its heyday during the 1950s and 1960s. Small-scale strip centers, abandoned brick commercial fronts, newly constructed single-family adjacent to substandard housing represents the current fabric of the corridor, but a resurgence of increased investment through public and private resources is on the rise along Simpson Road.

English Avenue is home to two historic school sites, Craddock Elementary School and English Avenue Elementary School. Craddock was Atlanta's first brick school built exclusively for African American students, while English Avenue Elementary (constructed in 1910) catered only to white students until about 1940. In addition, numerous faith-based Institutions have made a home in English Avenue with the most prominent churches with large facilities and community outreach and development services being Antioch Baptist Church North, Lindsay Street Baptist Church, Pilgrim Baptist Church, and Springfield Baptist Church. One institutional structure that serves as a historic marker in the community is the abandoned St. Mark sanctuary with its granite façade and historic architectural detail located in the center of the neighborhood at the corner of James P. Brawley Avenue (Chestnut Street) and Kennedy Street.



English Avenue School

Community Development Corporations (CDCs) and public and private partners have made a presence in English Avenue. Antioch Baptist Church and Bethursday Development Corporation are committed to the revitalization efforts in the community. In 2005, they opened Gateway Apartments,

the first new construction mixed-use residential developments in English Avenue. Future development plans include a mixed-use concept along Northside Drive with commercial spaces clustered along Northside

Gateway Apartments



Drive, several housing unit types approaching the interior of the community with open space amenities in transitional areas.

The English Avenue CDC in conjunction with Lindsay Street Baptist Church is serving English Avenue as the neighborhood community developer spearheading affordable residential development and renovation projects. English Avenue CDC in partnership with ANDP is embarking on a phased approach to revitalize and reinvigorate the Proctor Village apartments and the northeast corner of Simpson Road and Joseph E. Lowery Boulevard to bring approximately 200 new residential units and 30,000 s.f. of retail to the community.

The English Avenue Neighborhood Association (EANA) has contributed to the community pride and civic involvement amongst residents with its founding in 1995. In 2006, Reverend Howard Beckham, EANA President and Pastor of New Jerusalem Baptist Church in conjunction with the English Avenue Resource Center, lead efforts to provide job training, free meals and clothes to neighborhood residents, and vouchers for numerous social service programs offered throughout the City of Atlanta. The EANA Public Safety Committee is making great strides towards reducing crime and creating a safe and walkable community with the induction of the Sector Program and partnerships with the adjacent Vine City neighborhood, Department of Justice Project Safe Neighborhoods, City of Atlanta Office of Weed and Seed, the Atlanta Police Department, Georgia Tech and Spelman College.

Georgia Institute of Technology and the Institute Partnership work closely with English Avenue's various neighborhood organizations to help provide resources to improve and empower the neighborhood through community initiatives

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and public safety and neighborhood revitalization efforts.

1.4 Planning Process

The English Avenue CRP Update evolved over three phases beginning in the fall of 2005. The Planning Team, led by Urban Collage, Inc. in collaboration with Contente Terry, Market + Main and Grice and Associates, Inc. aimed at assembling an accurate picture of the existing conditions and developing an approach for redevelopment and growth based on community consensus for the study area. The Project Management Team met with the Planning Team regularly to review the planning products and to keep the project on schedule. Throughout the process a Steering Committee met with the Planning Team regularly and was kept abreast and solicited for guidance on development projects and recommendations. The centerpiece of public involvement initiatives included five public meetings designed to facilitate a community-wide vision and consensus points, receive validation and information sharing. The planning process included:

Phase 1 - Inventory and Assessment

The initial phase of work consisted of documenting and cataloging the existing physical and economic conditions. In addition, the Planning Team conducted a series of stakeholder interviews to help formulate an accurate picture of the existing conditions, issues and forces affecting the area. A detailed, parallel assessment of transportation and circulation patterns was carried out along with an independent market analysis. This background information is summarized on the following pages.

Phase 2 – Project Definition

The second phase of work built on the existing conditions assessment and engaged the community in the possibilities during a visioning workshop. Here, the community participated in a collaborative visioning and design session that addressed concerns of land use, housing revitalization, potential development areas, commercial needs, linkages, open space, transportation access and design standards. A Framework Plan and Circulation / Open Space Plan were created with supporting illustrations to graphically represent the recommendations defined during the visioning workshop. In addition, the Steering Committee participated in a bus tour of the community to collectively visit potential development sites and validate proposed concepts and recommendations.

Figure 1.3
Public Participation

Steering Committee	
Name	Representing
James Arpad	Property Owner
Tracy Bates	English Avenue CDC
Rev. Howard Beckham	English Avenue Neighborhood Association
Garnett Brown	COA Bureau of Planning
Greg Crawford	Faith Based Institution
J. Daniels	Property Owner
Mary Darian	Property Owner
Annette Diop	Property Owner
Steve Frair	Business Owner
Sarah Franklin	Resident
Greg Hawthorne	Vine City Health and Housing Ministry
Timothy Holdroyd	Property Owner
Bob Jones	Bethursday /Antioch Baptist Church North
Scott Levitan	Georgia Tech
Zachery McGee	Faith Based Institution
Edward Melton	Business Owner
Michele McIntosh Ross	City of Atlanta Bureau of Planning
Frances President	Resident
James Robertson	Property Owner
Dorothy Stephens	Resident
Tarnace Watkins	Atlanta Development Authority
"Able" Mable Thomas	State Representative/ Resident
Tonya M. Williams	Property Owner
Ivory Young	City Council Member District 3

Public Meetings	
Event	Date
Public Kick Off	October 22, 2005
Visioning Work Shop	December 10, 2005
English Avenue "Envision" Bus Tour	February 11, 2006
Preliminary Draft Plan	March 25, 2006
Draft Recommendations	May 20, 2006
Final Presentation	June 24, 2006

Phase 3 - Action Plan

The final phase of the planning process included developing an implementation schedule for the development projects, transportation recommendations, and zoning recommendations describing the phased development approach, cost, responsible parties, and funding sources. An ad hoc committee of the Steering Committee worked with the Planning Team to generate Design Guidelines to encourage consistent development character throughout the community.

1.5 Previous Planning Efforts

A number of recent planning initiatives exhibit policies and goals that support and strengthen the development of the English Avenue CRP Update Study Area.

Simpson Road Redevelopment Plan Update (2006) The plan focuses on rehabilitation of the Simpson Road corridor from Northside Drive to Hamilton E. Holmes Drive. The improvements targeted include preserving the existing single family fabric, a diversity of new housing options, retail and mixed use development fronting Simpson Road and roadway improvements that are pedestrian oriented.

Atlanta Beltline Redevelopment Plan (2004-2005) The Atlanta Development Authority conducted a study examining how a possible Tax Allocation District could finance transit and greenway improvements along the newly proposed Beltline route along abandoned railroad corridors that ring the City. The Beltline Redevelopment study analyzed the viability of a Beltline Tax Allocation District and its possible use as a catalyst for Economic growth. The Beltline's proximity to English Avenue may become an asset with proposed transit improvements and connections to Donald Lee Hollowell and Simpson Road, improvements to Maddox Park, renovations to an abandoned railroad corridor and the new Westside Park. As a result of the, a Tax Allocation District was passed by the Atlanta City Council, Fulton County and Atlanta Public Schools.

Inner Core Transit Study (2004-2005) MARTA conducted a study of the opportunities for the extension of the current system, new routes which would incorporate the BeltLine route and the C-Line route. Many of the proposed Beltline options pass through the western and central portions of Upper Westside. The study plans to locate a preferred alternate location for the proposed expansion.

Northside Drive Corridor Study (2005) The City of Atlanta has done a study which investigates Northside

Drive from I-20 to I-75. The study includes plans to improve transportation, land use, zoning, real estate development, and increase the employment rate within the Corridor.

Upper Westside Livable Centers Initiative (2005) The City of Atlanta Bureau of Planning has done a study in which they explore the possibilities for improvement in transportation, zoning, urban design as well as public and private investments. The study covers a two square mile area within the Northwest quadrant of the city of Atlanta.

Northwest Connectivity Study (2005) The Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) explored several opportunities for enhancing the current transportation connections between several activity centers including Midtown Atlanta, Cumberland Galleria area and Town Center on the north. The study also focused on principal Highways such as Marietta Boulevard, Atlanta Road, Bolton Road, South Cobb Parkway, and Northside Drive.

Donald L. Hollowell Parkway Redevelopment Plan (2004) This study encompasses Donald L. Hollowell Parkway for a 6 mile stretch from Stiff street (to the east of the Bankhead MARTA station) west to the Chattahoochee River. The plan calls for mercantile nodes along the stretch of Donald L. Hollowell Parkway, and includes improvements and expansions to the current transportation and environmental controls. All of which will spark the economic growth and development of the community.

Vine City Redevelopment Plan (September 2004) The Vine City Civic Association commissioned a plan to address Land Use and Development, Economic Empowerment, Housing, Historic and Natural Resources, Traffic and Transportation, Community facilities/ Social Services, and Urban Design with the development of neighborhood specific design guidelines. The Redevelopment Plan and Zoning Plan were adopted by the Atlanta City Council in 2004.

Georgia Tech Master Plan (2004) The Georgia Tech Campus is undergoing a major expansion that includes the creation of several new buildings along Marietta Street and North Avenue. The expansion of the campus will provide 24 hour activity including research facilities and incubators.

1.6 Goals and Objectives

During the vision and goal-setting process, participants were encouraged to express a wide-ranging list of community-wide goals.

Land Use

Goal: Ensure appropriate future development patterns.

Objective #1: Identify short-term and long-term solutions for blighted vacant lots

Objective #2: Promote mixed-use and live/ work development along the periphery of the neighborhood.

Objective #3: Define Design standards for future development.

Objective #4: Increase the percentage of green space in the community.

Housing

Goal: Promote diverse and quality housing types for existing and new residents.

Objective #1: Maintain and preserve the residential character of the neighborhood.

Objective #2: Increase code enforcement and hold inactive absentee landlords accountable.

Objective #3: Increase home ownership and improve rental opportunities.

Objective #4: Promote a mixed-income community.

Objective #5: Identify opportunities to build quality affordable single family housing for existing and new residents

Objective #6: Aggressively pursue funds for owner occupied home rehabilitation throughout the community.

Economic Development

Goal: Promote economic development opportunities.

Objective #1: Increase employment opportunities for local residents in new and existing businesses located in the community.

Objective #2: Define and attract new neighborhood retail development opportunities at appropriate nodes and along peripheral corridors of the neighborhood.

Objective #3: Utilize the Westside Tax Allocation District and other future public funding sources for development and housing rehabilitation.

Public Facilities and Natural Resources

Goal: Create quality community facilities in the neighborhood

Objective #1: Build a new recreational facility with multi-generational programs, resources and amenities.

Objective #2: Develop well maintained public parks and public spaces within the neighborhood.

Objective #3: Identify connections to the BeltLine that will support neighborhood stability and economic growth.

Circulation and Infrastructure

Goal: Increase the efficiency, attractiveness, and safety of the circulation system and infrastructure.

Objective #1: Enhance the pedestrian environment with the installation of street lighting and sidewalks.

Objective #2: Increase connectivity and reduce opportunities for cut through traffic on minor arterials

Objective #3: Cleanup existing alleyway and develop creative and functional alternative uses for them.

Objective #4: Identify and install community gateways.

Objective #5: Reduce the number of reoccurring flood areas.

Public Safety

Goal: Promote a neighborhood that is clean, well maintained, and free of crime and substance abuse.

Objective #1: Develop and implement beautification programs to enhance the character of the neighborhood.

Objective #2: Reduce the overall crime rate.

Objective #3: Better promote and utilize existing social service and self-help programs in the community.

Objective #4: Investigate the installation of a City of Atlanta Police Precinct in the neighborhood.

Objective #5: Further develop the collaboration between the English Avenue Neighborhood Association, residents and the City of Atlanta Police Department.